

MYSTERY LOSSIEMOUTH TRAGEDY Seiner and five crew lost

THE LOSSIEMOUTH fishing fleet was staying in port this week as a mark of respect to the five crewmen who went missing on Sunday in the 60ft. seiner *Sapphire*. All hope for the men has disappeared and the search called off.

Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher, who was due to visit the port on Friday, has cancelled her visit on hearing of the tragedy.

Sapphire (UL 194) disappeared while en route from Lochinver to her home port of Lossiemouth via the Pentland Firth.

A full-scale search was called off on Sunday after divers located her engine and winch off the rocky headland near Storr Point.

The divers were taken to this spot on board the fishing vessel *Scotia* after searchers

had spotted wreckage — a battered lifeboat and a lifebelt marked *Sapphire*. No bodies were found.

The tragedy only began to be realised after a 48-hour silence. She had left Lochinver at 2 a.m. on Thursday morning last week.

It was only after Skipper James McLeod (38) failed to arrive home to keep a wedding anniversary date with his wife that the full implication of the silence began to be seen.

A search was then organised involving Lochinver life boat, and RAF Nimrod, British Airways helicopters, Lochinver Auxiliary Coast Rescue Company and a



Skipper John Thomson: convinced *Sapphire* ran onto the rocks.

number of Lochinver-based fishing vessels.

Other crew members lost were: Raymond Bruce (36), George Thomson (58), Jimmie Gault (55), all of Lossiemouth, and 21-year-old Robert Craig, of Elgin, whose wife is expecting their first baby.

The sixth member of the crew, William McLeod (29), had been off work for seven weeks with a shoulder injury and had failed to persuade his doctor to allow him to rejoin his crew mates on Wednesday before *Sapphire* left on her fateful voyage.

The tragedy may have come to light sooner if there had not been some confusion over Skipper McLeod's intentions. There was a fault in the winch gear on *Sapphire* and it was not known whether Skipper McLeod was going to attempt fishing before taking the vessel through the Minch round the north coast of Scotland and through the Pentland Firth back to Lossiemouth for repairs.

When Skipper McLeod failed to turn up on Friday

his wife thought he had been delayed by the winch trouble.

While many theories were being put forward as to what happened to the vessel, one of Lossiemouth's top skippers who knows the area *Sapphire* was in said he is convinced she had been driven onto the rocks.

Skipper John Thomson of *Horizon* pointed out that from the location of the wreckage he did not think *Sapphire* could have been overwhelmed by a sea.

"One mile beyond Storr Point — I don't think he could have been fishing, so I don't think he would have been overcome out at sea."

Skipper Thomson was also sure that *Sapphire* had been lost before daylight on Thursday. "We sailed from Lochinver at 8 o'clock on Thursday night — 18 hours after *Sapphire*," he added.

The little port of 6,000 people now finds itself bound tightly together in grief. It was 20 years ago when the port was mourning the loss of

'Othello' delayed

THE freezer stern trawler *Othello* did not leave Hull last weekend for her new Australian fishing base at Albany as expected. Some preparatory work — mainly stowage — was still awaiting completion.

Originally the vessel was due to set out last Friday but after a late revision the sailing was deferred until Tuesday this week.

A BUT spokesman then told *Fishing News* "There is

a local crew and boat who the seine netter *Demeter* went down off the Aberdeen coast.

Immediate financial help for relatives of the lost crew will be taken care of by a disaster fund which fishermen of Lossiemouth have been contributing to for over 10 years. Through their Association, fishermen have been paying money into the fund under a levy system.

still a further delay in preparations but we are sure she will be able to leave the weekend.

The ship is taking out a lot of equipment for a processing factory being built in connection with the Australian venture. Also the processing plant is a Baader machinery and freezing equipment.

"The crew are still waiting to sail and we are hopeful the *Othello* will be away at the weekend," said the spokesman.

£77,449 RECORD FOR 'REVENGE'

TOP DISTANT water trawler skipper Johnny Meadows smashed the Grimsby port grossing record last week.

He brought BUT's giant sidewinder *Ross Revenge* home from a 26-day Bear Island trip with 2,128 kits which sold for £77,449.

It was the largest-ever grossing by a local trawler at Grimsby, although the Icelandic stern dragger *Ogri's*

national grossing record of £98,540 — established on the last day of November 1976 — was never in danger.

Skipper Meadows is making a habit of pulling off record trips when distant water fishing is generally recognised as being below its best.

Last year, late in August, he set-up the old Grimsby port high of £75,697 from 3,179 kits of Icelandic fish; and during '75 and '74 he scored heavily when the rest

of the distant water fleet was having rather a quiet time.

However, the 222ft. trawler has been one of Grimsby's most consistent top earners. Her latest achievement is yet another important milestone in her Grimsby career.

Ross Revenge landed 1,968 kits of cod and a cod-hungry market in the big tally. This alone accounted for £74,543 of the record grossing. The balance came mostly from 51 kits and 90 of catfish.

Scotland will give a total of 101,000 tons.

Landings of pilchards and other pelagic fish may increase from 8,000 tons in 1976 to 14,000 tons this year. In 1978 there is likely to be further exploitation of blue whiting which might result in landings of about 10,000 tons to bring the total for other pelagic fish up to 24,000 tons.

In 1976, landings of all fish (except shellfish) by British vessels amounted to 950,000 tons. They may drop to between 743,000 and 765,000 this year, and in 1978 may fall again to 721,000 to 771,000 tons, due to the expected fall in landings of demersal food fish.

During the first half of 1977, domestic landings of demersal food fish were kept up by big catches of haddock from the North Sea. But marine biologists expect that North Sea haddock catches will start to decline and the haddock quota for 1978 will almost certainly be lower than the 1977 catch.

From a total of 212,000 tons in 1976, FERU forecasts an eventual 1977 cod landing of 128,000 tons and 1978 landings at 146,000 tons. This increase depends on assuming

Recommended

From 90,000 tons in 1976, FERU expects the sprat catch to rise to 93,000 tons in 1977, of which 84,000 tons is from the North Sea. In 1978 the UK share of the 400,000 tons recommended TAC would be 92,000 tons.

With no winter herring fishery in the North Sea in 1976, it assumes this quota will be taken. A further 9,000 tons of herring landings by UK

catches compared with 1976 and the maintenance of its 1977 level of catches in the north-east Arctic.

Neither of these conditions may be met," says FERU, "and so a further fall in cod landings in 1978 is quite possible."

Expected

FERU describes its projections as a quantitative indication of how UK landings are expected to develop in 1977 and 1978, based on assumptions that are reasonable at the time of writing (August 1977). But it emphasises that these assumptions are necessarily arbitrary and approximate.

"Although a reduction in UK landings of 1977 and 1978 is likely in 1977 and 1978, based on assumptions that are reasonable at the time of writing (August 1977). But it emphasises that these assumptions are necessarily arbitrary and approximate."

We will still be buying says meal plant MACKEREL ORDER HAS 'NO TEETH'

THE GOVERNMENT'S clamp-down on industrial fishing for mackerel has upset the UK's biggest fish meal buyers.

Managing director of the Hull Fish Meal and Oil Co. Ltd. Matt Anderson, said this week that he was still expecting to get supplies from the South West — a region from which he bought 25,000 tons last winter at about £80 a ton.

He said: "The Government can't compel anyone to eat

mackerel. In this country there is a very small human consumption of the species.

"Out of every catch landed, there is a proportion which is not fit for human consumption. The industry's buyers on the quayside are the ones who will decide what they want. If the catch isn't fit to eat I think it will go for meal rather than be dumped back at sea."

Mr. Anderson said he did not think the Mackerel Protection Order, 1977, had

any teeth at all.

He added that he was not in favour of fishing directly for meal, and was sensitive of the image people had today about fish-meal.

High quality

"We make high-quality foodstuffs for pigs and poultry," he said. "The oil goes for margarine and shortenings. You could say that when the housewife sits down to her boiled egg, she is

eating her fish."

Mr. Anderson said the country imported between 250,000 and 300,000 tons of fish-meal a year at between £280 and £320 a ton.

Any contributions from the home fleet helped keep down this part of our import bill.

A MAFF spokesman said that all the points raised were sure to be considered at the time of the review of the Protection Order on October 31, when catchers' and consumers' views would be examined.

Spanish skipper fined £5,000

THE RELIEF skipper of the 1,000-ton Spanish trawler, *Sanga*, was fined £5,000 by Plymouth Magistrates on Friday after pleading guilty to fishing without a licence within the British 200-mile limit.

Alexandro Rodriguez, 54, of San Sebastian, was acting skipper on *Sanga* for a month while the regular skipper was on leave, the court was told.

Only 140 Spanish trawlers were allowed to fish within the limit. *Sanga* had held a licence, but this had expired last June. And an application had since been made for a new one.

Hilary Collins, prosecuting for MAFF, said *Sanga* was spotted fishing 130 miles S.W. of the Bishop Rock by the Royal Naval fishery protection vessel, HMS *Brighton*.

A boarding party from the frigate found an eight-ton

catch in the hold, worth £5,000. Rodriguez was co-operative all along.

Defending, David Bishop said this was Rodriguez's first time in charge of such a large vessel in these waters.

The court made no order for the confiscation of gear or catch.

Check your FN number

MANY *Fishing News* readers may have noticed a mistake in our issue numbers recently. It jumped from 3341 on the August 19 issue, to 3442 the following week.

We have corrected the number to 3344 this issue and apologise for any confusion it may have caused.

... Big rush for licences

THE NEW mackerel licence scheme, which came into force on Saturday, brought great activity and interest at Newlyn, Cornwall.

Hundreds of applications have been received at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries office at the port, which is the biggest mackerel fishing centre in the county and also the centre for all applications west of a line from Mevagissey to Padstow inclusive.

Applications have been flowing in at a very fast rate for boats of all sizes, and particularly for the vast number of hand-liners which operate in Cornwall.

The new scheme, which it is hoped will protect liners, is aimed at conservation by concentrating on mackerel for human consumption rather

than fish meal.

All British boats engaged in the mackerel fishery will have to be licensed in an initial six-weeks period from last Saturday to October 31, when the position will be reviewed. Licences are issued free.

'Pearl' on her own

BUT's Kingston *Pearl* (Sk. B. Turner), the only trawler landing for Hull's Monday market, grossed £36,980 for 982 kits caught in a 26-day Bear Island/White Sea trip.

Newington's C. S. Forester (Sk. R. Taylor), which had left Hull last Friday for the Bear Island grounds, has returned for repairs.

Billingsgate

IT WILL be remembered that about Christmas-time last year the sale of cookies was stopped in the market by the public health authorities. There is no doubt that for three months or so the Leigh cookiemen had a very rough time.

Not only was their main source of income stopped but the authorities placed stringent and costly requirements on them before the trade could be resumed.

It is therefore pleasing to report that they are all not only in production, but all appear to have made up for the volume of lost sales. Their product is now, in the main, well protected by polythene bags, brightly printed with the producer's name and at least one producer, Roy West, has invested in a refrigerated van to bring his cookies to market.

Occasional lapses in the agreed code of practice have been noted but it is hoped that those responsible will mend their ways before another disaster hits the industry.

It would be particularly bad luck if, after all the trouble the producers have taken, the retailers let them down. The Fishmongers Company issued a letter of advice to retailers but there must be some doubt if certain customers, particularly the part-timers who visit the market only on Saturday or Sunday, have got the message.

It may be thought a little literary to quote John Donne but not only is "no man an island" but the point must be made that no part of the fish trade is isolated from another.

That which is a discredit to one part of the trade affects many others. One careless stall holder can adversely affect the business of the many. It is obviously impossible for a Billingsgate merchant to discipline his customers after the goods have left his control but blatant offences against the code of the advice letter deserve the censure of all immediately they occur.

...all the way with DECCA



COMMENT

THE FORECAST by the White Fish Authority that imports of cod could soar by over £40 million this year will, if proved right, be the most tangible evidence so far of the erosion of British fishing operations by limit extensions.

Shortly, this demersal fish crisis is expected to take another turn for the worse with the anticipated closure of the north-east Arctic grounds to British trawlers. As a last hope the eyes of Humber-side owners will now be even more firmly fixed on the grounds to the west of Britain where the seasonal blue whiting fishery takes place.

The snag with blue whiting is that no one is yet one hundred per cent sure of its acceptability on the food market. From a report to be published in *Fishing News* next week, it seems the White Fish Authority is optimistic about the processing and acceptability trials it is carrying out with blue whiting.

In the end, however, it will be the major frozen food firms who decide whether we are in business with blue whiting. For some time now, both Findus and Birds Eye have had blue whiting processing lines at work in their factories. So far they have been reluctant to reveal what progress has been made.

Time is now running out for the distant water fleet and this coyness on the part of the frozen food firms could prove costly. Trawler owners will want to know whether it's worth keeping trawlers operational through the Winter to get at the blue whiting in the Spring.

THIS WEEK the thoughts of the British fishing industry go out to the port of Lossiemouth which is mourning the loss of five fishermen in the *Sapphire* tragedy. While there is a new air of prosperity in some of our inshore ports, it is worth reflecting on the price that sometimes has to be paid for it.

fishing news

Editor: Harry Barrett.

Assistant Editor: Ian Strutt.

Advertisement Director: Fred Purcell.

Advertisement Manager: Bill Barber.

Published weekly

Postal subscription rate: £8 per annum £8.50 overseas

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

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Charts to buy and make

"WE ARE NOW fishing with a 7 ft. otter trawl, but without adequate information on the best grounds, our groundrope or boards often get fast."

"We have an Admiralty chart which shows some wrecks and the nature of the bottom in some places, yet it gives no indication as to which is good, clear trawling ground."

"Are there more helpful charts available?"

Fishing charts are useful: Kingfisher, Blue Back, and other fisheries charts covering the North Sea and adjacent waters produced by the Admiralty Hydrographic Department together with its European opposite numbers.

If you want to fish an area covered by a Kingfisher 'S' or 'T' series chart, one of these would help.

Although the 'S' series charts were initially produced for seiners working well offshore in the North Sea, many of them now cover coastal areas.

With a scale of approximately 1:43,000 (1 in. to one mile) and a size of 40 in. by 20 in., they cover an area of 10 x 20 miles, divided down the centre, to make a working area of 10 x 10 miles.

'T' series charts are produced on an even larger scale — 1:24,000.

Blue Back charts have a much smaller scale but still show trawlable grounds in

great detail. They cover practically all EEC waters.

One produced to a scale of 0.12 inches to a mile covering coastal waters between the Humber and Orkney might help you.

Eventually the chart which will be of most help to you of all will be one which you have inscribed to a considerable extent yourselves. If a Kingfisher 'S' or 'T' series chart does not cover your area, such a chart can be made as follows:

The White Fish Authority's Fisheries Development Officer (Fishing Charts) will supply on request a Kingfisher chart centred on any chosen position.

Within a month or so you will receive one on which are depicted banks, depths, buoys, lightvessels and a few landmarks, and engraved solely with a Decca lattice.

To make your own chart you can transfer essential information about grounds and fasteners from your Admiralty chart and then begin to add to it daily.

Alternatively you can get a Tartan plotting sheet (D.8871) published by the Admiralty Hydrographic Department, transfer all the necessary information from your Admiralty chart to it, and then add your own information.

A Tartan plot is a sheet of paper the size of a chart inscribed with a diagram on each side. Each diagram consists of two sets of parallel straight lines intersecting each other at 15, 30, 45, 60, 75 or 90 degrees.

Practice is to use a sheet on which the lines intersect at approximately the same angle as the Decca lattice for their area. They mark the lines with lane numbers at intervals which give them a large scale plot on which to mark fasteners, etc.

Tartan plots and Admiralty Fisheries Charts are obtainable from Kelvin Hughes

ANY QUESTIONS?

IF YOU have any questions about boats, equipment, gear or methods, John Burgess is always prepared to try and answer them if they are sent with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

John Burgess' Log



and other Admiralty chart agents.

Blue Back fishing charts are produced by Inray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson at Wych House, Saint Ives, Cambridgeshire.

And Kingfisher charts are produced by the White Fish Authority Industrial Development Unit, St. Andrew's Dock, Hull.

Jigging for herring

"IS IT TRUE that herring are caught in substantial quantities on bare hooks off Antrim in Northern Ireland during the summer."

"If so, please tell me the sort of herring being caught and how they are hooked."

For over 100 years there has been a substantial bare hook jig fishery off the Antrim coast from early May to the end of June. Some 400 jiggers take part to provide their families with fresh, salted, smoked and frozen herring.

The herring enter the North Channel around March, some having been caught in Rathlin Sound and off Fair Head earlier in the year.

Reaching Hunter Rock and the Maidens between early April and the middle of May, the herring on arrival off Antrim are in poor condition and entirely devoid of fat. By the middle of June they are in prime condition.

One source says the herring will take bare hooks when feeding on fry. They can only be caught in quantity from

sunset to dusk and are seldom caught during the day.

Ideal conditions are a warm, calm evening when the fish start rising at sundown to a depth of about six fathoms and later to a depth of three fathoms as the light fades. If they are hooked at greater depths than these, they are likely to be lost on account of their soft mouths.

The traditional jig is an oval-shaped lead weighing 2½ lb. or just over a kilo. A triple hook is attached at the bottom end and a pair of hooks fastened to short droppers threaded through the lead, similar to the method of attaching hooks to Scottish cod rippers.

This has been improved upon by development of a jig incorporating a number of 'bars'. A bar consists of two 18 in. (457 mm) lengths of piano wire twisted together so that two individual ¾ in. (89 mm) lengths of wire protrude at either end in the shape of a V.

To the ends of the individual wires are attached 1½ in. (38 mm) droppers and to these are attached bright new No. 16 haddock hooks. Distance between pairs of hooks is about 12 in. (305 mm).

Expert jiggers, whose boats have a beam of 7-10 ft. (2-3 m.), rig as many as five bars on 60 ft. (18 m.) main lines and attach 1-3 lb. lead sinkers or 'murderers' at the lower end.

The jiggers do not take each fish off the hook by hand but jerk the catch into the bottom of the boat and then the jig back over the side again.

Fire warning

A FIRE detection system which triggers alarms if the temperature in any of a boat's 'danger zones' reaches a level likely to cause an outbreak of fire has been introduced.

The system employs 250 ft. of linear heat sensor supplied by Pathfinder Safety Systems, the fire alarm and detection division of Walsall Conduits Limited.

Most boat fire alarms react after a fire has broken out, says Mr Mills. By this time it may be too late to control the fire and the only safe action to take then is to abandon ship. The Mills system monitors the boat's critical equipment and fittings at all times, sounding an alarm and switching on a warning light if overheating occurs.

The Pathfinder sensor is similar in appearance to conventional electrical flex, but it contains two insulated high tensile steel elements within a polypropylene sheath. If the ambient temperature of the sensor reaches danger point the insulation disintegrates within a few seconds, bringing the elements into contact.

This causes a 'closed circuit' which triggers the controller to which the sensor is connected.

Mr Mills has a system in

September 23, 1977

When shoals are at a depth of 3-6 fathoms, average catch of jiggers using five bars is about 400 fish a night.

More sophisticated, it can also be used. One successful fisherman used a rod with a fixed spool reel for speed, monofilament nylon line and a 10 oz. (283 gm) sinker at the end and six No. 16 clean bare haddock hooks set at 1½ in. (38 mm) intervals.

Even if they are less productive than jigs with bars, the rods have to be used a seasonal strain of half a ton of fish.

Prawn net supplier

"I HAVE BEEN using small mesh netting, similar to shrimp netting, but made of thicker stronger twine, mounted on frames of pear-shaped heavy gauge galvanised mild wire for catching prawns in rock pools."

"Where can I obtain netting and can it be bag shaped ready to fit frames?"

Similar prawn netting is obtainable from Bridge Gundry Ltd., Bridge Dorset.

The manager of the company's Marine Division, perhaps say where the netting can be made to your requirements and shape.

The 'latest' in fishing

"PLEASE TELL ME which is the most up-to-date book depicting different types of fishing vessels and how they gear is laid out."

The latest and best book of this kind is Commercial Fishing Methods by John Sainsbury. It is published by Long, Garden Walk, Farnham, Surrey, and costs £4.85, plus five per cent packing and postage.

September 23, 1977

Maureen holds up aircraft wreckage

WRECKAGE from the fuselage of a light aircraft in which solo pilot Colin Clark went missing a month ago has been picked up in the nets of a fishing boat off the Berwickshire coast.

It was identified by the registration mark GB AT 1. Mr. Clark of Norham, near Berwick, the 52-year-old managing director of the agricultural engineering firm of Thomas Sherriff and Co. Ltd. was last seen four weeks ago when he took off in his four-seater Rheims Focket from Winfield Airfield, west of Berwick. He left no details of his flight.

Search

A few days later his briefcase was washed ashore at Cockburnspath but full scale searches of the coastline drew a blank. The section of fuselage was picked up by the Eymouth-based fishing boat Maureen, skippered by Peter Patterson, about a mile off Cockburnspath.

Good roker catches

MILFORD HAVEN trawlers took advantage of good roker fishing to land some of the biggest catches of the variety seen at the port in several weeks.

Top ship of the week was the *Norrad Star*, commanded by Skipper John Rogers, which landed 202 kits for a grossing of £7,512. On the same day the *Jadestart* (Gipsy (Sk. Jim Brodie) — the combination which holds the port record of £8,600 — made £4,877 from 144 kits.

There was a fall in markets the following day when the

September 23, 1977

Crew holds up Phantom again

Boston Phantom — another broken trip owing to disputes.

THE Grimsby motor trawler *Boston Phantom* had a broken trip last week when she was recalled from the Westerly grounds off Scotland after only nine days due to a manning dispute.

It is understood a small number of deckhands advised the skipper they were not prepared to carry on gutting the catch although the fishing was good and the former distant water vessel had already around 500 kits aboard.

TREBLE TROUBLE

THEY say trouble comes in threes and the crew of the Lowestoft trawler *St. Croix* would certainly agree with that after their last 12-day trip in the North Sea.

She was near the Danish coast when third hand Peter Anderson had to be air-lifted ashore with suspected appendicitis.

Luckily he made a quick recovery and was sent back to England.

Later in the week the cook, Norman Knight, was injured in the galley and also had to be air-lifted ashore.

He is in hospital in Denmark where his condition was reported to be 'not serious'.

Finally, during a North Westerly gale gusting force nine, *St. Croix* had to tow another trawler, the *Waddington* which had engine trouble, for 37 hours.

Last steamer goes

GRIMSBY's only surviving steam trawler *Northern Sceptre* left the Humber port on the evening tide of September 14 for the last time.

The 804-ton steamer was towed to the Medway where she is to be broken up. Built in 1934 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd. of Selby, the 183-ft. distant water steamer was one of the largest conventional steam trawlers to operate from Grimsby and in an active fishing career spanning 21 years she was regarded as a highly successful ship.

Forgotten

At that time 19 steam trawlers were working the distant water grounds from Grimsby, but they like *Northern Sceptre* were sold for scrap. Somehow it seemed the 23-year-old vessel had been 'forgotten' by her scrap metal owners as she laid forlornly tied to Grimsby's North Wall for over 24 years and several efforts were made to secure the steamer as a floating museum.

Due to lack of interest, facilities and support at Grimsby they all failed and *Northern Sceptre* was towed away, fittingly, by the 31-year-old steam tug *Cervin* owned by International Towing Ltd. of Sir

Gringbourne, Kent — one of the few remaining steam tugs still in service.

September 23, 1977

Good roker catches

Pictou Sealion, commanded by Skipper Trevor Salter, landed 181 kits, including 20 of cod, 25 of whiting, 75 of roker, two of turbot and brill, 10 of plaice and three of soles, which sold for a total of £6,601.

The vessel had been 12 days at sea.

The week's landings were completed by the *Georgina Wilson*, (Sk. Tom Smith) which landed 181 kits — five of cod, 20 whiting, 70 of roker, four of turbot and brill, 20 of plaice, and 12 of soles — which sold for £6,286.

Good roker catches

DAVID Burns has taken the place of sales manager with Trident Marine Ltd., the Irish marine equipment suppliers based at Donegal.

Mr Burns was formerly with IMEC, the Irish Marine Electronic Company, of which he was a founder director.

Changing

On her maiden voyage in January 1954 she brought home over 3,000 kits which sold for £8,821 and in March 1970 landed the Grimsby port grossing record with £22,269; figures which reflect the big changes in the price of fish which have taken place since.

The fate of *Northern Sceptre* was virtually sealed

by massive price increases in the cost of heavy bunkering fuel oil from the first day of January 1975 and after two trips she was laid up by owners, BUT, along with eight similar steamers in February 1975.

Fire warning

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The 804-ton steamer was towed to the Medway where she is to be broken up. Built in 1934 by Cochrane & Sons Ltd. of Selby, the 183-ft. distant water steamer was one of the largest conventional steam trawlers to operate from Grimsby and in an active fishing career spanning 21 years she was regarded as a highly successful ship.

Forgotten

At that time 19 steam trawlers were working the distant water grounds from Grimsby, but they like *Northern Sceptre* were sold for scrap. Somehow it seemed the 23-year-old vessel had been 'forgotten' by her scrap metal owners as she laid forlornly tied to Grimsby's North Wall for over 24 years and several efforts were made to secure the steamer as a floating museum.

Due to lack of interest, facilities and support at Grimsby they all failed and *Northern Sceptre* was towed away, fittingly, by the 31-year-old steam tug *Cervin* owned by International Towing Ltd. of Sir

Gringbourne, Kent — one of the few remaining steam tugs still in service.

September 23, 1977

Crew holds up Phantom again

Boston Phantom — another broken trip owing to disputes.

THE Grimsby motor trawler *Boston Phantom* had a broken trip last week when she was recalled from the Westerly grounds off Scotland after only nine days due to a manning dispute.

It is understood a small number of deckhands advised the skipper they were not prepared to carry on gutting the catch although the fishing was good and the former distant water vessel had already around 500 kits aboard.

TREBLE TROUBLE

THEY say trouble comes in threes and the crew of the Lowestoft trawler *St. Croix* would certainly agree with that after their last 12-day trip in the North Sea.

She was near the Danish coast when third hand Peter Anderson had to be air-lifted ashore with suspected appendicitis.

Luckily he made a quick recovery and was sent back to England.

Later in the week the cook, Norman Knight, was injured in the galley and also had to be air-lifted ashore.

He is in hospital in Denmark where his condition was reported to be 'not serious'.

Finally, during a North Westerly gale gusting force nine, *St. Croix* had to tow another trawler, the *Waddington* which had engine trouble, for 37 hours.

Good roker catches

Pictou Sealion, commanded by Skipper Trevor Salter, landed 181 kits, including 20 of cod, 25 of whiting, 75 of roker, two of turbot and brill, 10 of plaice and three of soles, which sold for a total of £6,601.

The vessel had been 12 days at sea.

The week's landings were completed by the *Georgina Wilson*, (Sk. Tom Smith) which landed 181 kits — five of cod, 20 whiting, 70 of roker, four of turbot and brill, 20 of plaice, and 12 of soles — which sold for £6,286.

Fire warning

A FIRE detection system which triggers alarms if the temperature in any of a boat's 'danger zones' reaches a level likely to cause an outbreak of fire has been introduced.

The system employs 250 ft. of linear heat sensor supplied by Pathfinder Safety Systems, the fire alarm and detection division of Walsall Conduits Limited.

Most boat fire alarms react after a fire has broken out, says Mr Mills. By this time it may be too late to control the fire and the only safe action to take then is to abandon ship. The Mills system monitors the boat's critical equipment and fittings at all times, sounding an alarm and switching on a warning light if overheating occurs.

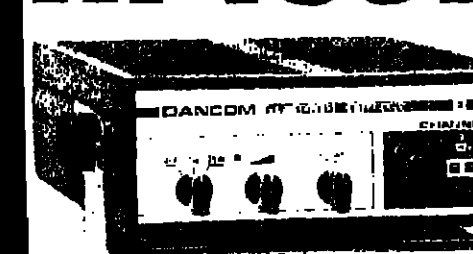
The Pathfinder sensor is similar in appearance to conventional electrical flex, but it contains two insulated high tensile steel elements within a polypropylene sheath. If the ambient temperature of the sensor reaches danger point the insulation disintegrates within a few seconds, bringing the elements into contact.

This causes a 'closed circuit' which triggers the controller to which the sensor is connected.

Mr Mills has a system in

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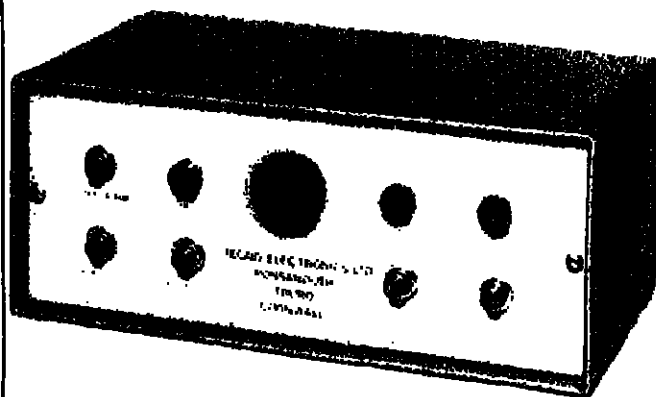
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* Patent Pending.

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REAL COOL RHODELLA

RHODELLA, the latest wooden seiner-trawler from Jones Buckie Shipyard, is fitted with fishroom chilling plant. The 74-footer has been built for Skipper Eric Smith of Buckie.

She has very attractive lines and was designed by naval architects, G. L. Watson and Co. Her beam is 21ft. 6in. and tonnage under Part IV registry, just under 50.

She is the second **Rhodella** built by Jones for Skipper Smith, the first being a 71ft. cruiser-sterned vessel completed in 1966.

Skipper Smith said that he had chosen a transom stern for the new boat as this gives more room aft both on deck and below. Other skippers have assured him that a transom stern in no way detracts from a vessel's sea keeping abilities.

Rhodella's fishroom chilling plant, supplied by the Aberdeen-based firm of Currie and Thomson (Engineers) Ltd., was installed to stop the ice from melting and, therefore, preserve the quality of the catch. Skipper Smith told *Fishing News*.

Without a chilling plant, he said, a ten-ton supply of ice can melt away well before the end of a five or six day fishing trip.

Rhodella is of traditional Scottish seiner-trawler layout with the deckhouse aft. She is fitted with a full range of gear handling machinery which is now becoming almost standard equipment aboard modern vessels of this type.

A two-drum set of seine rope storage reels from the Loeis Hydraulic Co. are fitted at the after side of the winch and have capacity on each drum for 17 coils of three in. rope. They are fully controlled from the wheelhouse.

D. F. Sutherland and Co. of Lossiemouth supplied the hydraulic combined seine and trawl winch which is fitted well forward, under the shelter of the whaleback.

Its trawl drums are fitted forward of the seine barrels, in an athwartships position, thereby saving deck space. Her Loeis Hydraulics power block is hung on a single

reach derrick aft of the deckhouse.

All the seine rope rollers and guides were made by Fraserburgh Engineering Co. The units have rollers of specially hardened steel and they have been found to last about twice as long as conventional equipment.

Trawl galleys are fitted on both quarters, while a fish washer is fitted under the gutting shelter.

Foremast, landing derrick and fish derrick have been made of aluminium by the Emsworth firm of John Powell.

Skipper Smith said that aluminium helps to keep top weight down and is a good stability feature as was proved on the old **Rhodella**. Her masts and spars were of aluminium.

Steel has been used for the seine derricks and small mizzen mast aboard the new vessel, so as to avoid incompatibility with the steel deckhouse.

Whaleback, gutting shelter and hatch covers are also fabricated from aluminium and, together with the steel deckhouse and other steelwork, were made by the

builders.

Chalmitt rubber-cased floodlights are carried on the superstructure and a Francis searchlight is mounted on the wheelhouse top.

Propulsion is provided by a Kelvin TBCS diesel engine with a continuous rating of 500 shp at 1,350 rpm to drive the 60in. diameter fixed-pitch propeller through a Reintjes gearbox of 4:1 reduction ratio.

Belt-driven from the fore end of the engine are a 110 V generator and two 24 V generators all of Transmotor manufacture.

The Dwyer variable delivery hydraulic pump for the winch is driven from the fore end of the engine through a flexible coupling and a Sutherland stop-up gearbox.

A Vickers hydraulic pump mounted on the Sutherland gearbox drives the power block, while another Vickers pump unit belt-driven off the extension shaft at the fore end of the engine provides power for the rope reels.

Power for a 3in. Desmi bilge and general service pump, a Transmotor 110 V generator, a Transmotor 24 V generator, and a hydraulic

pump to drive the machinery for fishing are the alarm retrieval, is supplied by the Tec-Aid Electric Ltd. fire detection and alarm system.

Electrically driven equipment includes three Woods ventilation fans and a 2in. diameter bilge and general service pump. Tanks have capacity for some 3,000 gallons of oil.

Much of the electrical equipment in the wheelhouse was supplied by Woodcock Aberdeen, including the Elac LAZ 72 Echo/LAZ 62 Fishline with picture and bottom facilities; Sator T22 RT144 vhf radio; Mermaid 22 Wadsworth Receiver; Woodcock Back System; and Robson AP7 Automatic Pilot.

Some also supplied the Liferadio set.

Other wheelhouse equipment includes Deca Navigator; Deca Radar; Morse engine; and H100 ESG steering gear.

Part of the fishroom, winch controls; Telford H100 ESG steering gear; and will Fiamm horn; Sator overboard compass; and Wyndstrutments Mk3 bilge and Bridon

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...Cold chill bits some good

WITH THE need for conservation a major issue in the fishing industry today, fishermen are looking for ways of landing their catches in good condition in order to attract the highest market prices.

As inflation becomes an ever increasing problem they are also looking for ways of cutting down their operating costs.

Chilling plants in the fishrooms of seiner-trawlers have a double advantage in that the catch can be held at a temperature of just above freezing point for as long as required, and the ice supply can be prevented from melting away too quickly.

Rhodella is the latest vessel to be fitted with a chilling plant from the Aberdeen based firm of Currie and Thom-

son (Engineers) Ltd., through their Elgin branch. This plant, the manufacturers say, is their most up to date unit and comes very near to what they feel is the ideal chilling equipment for this type of vessel.

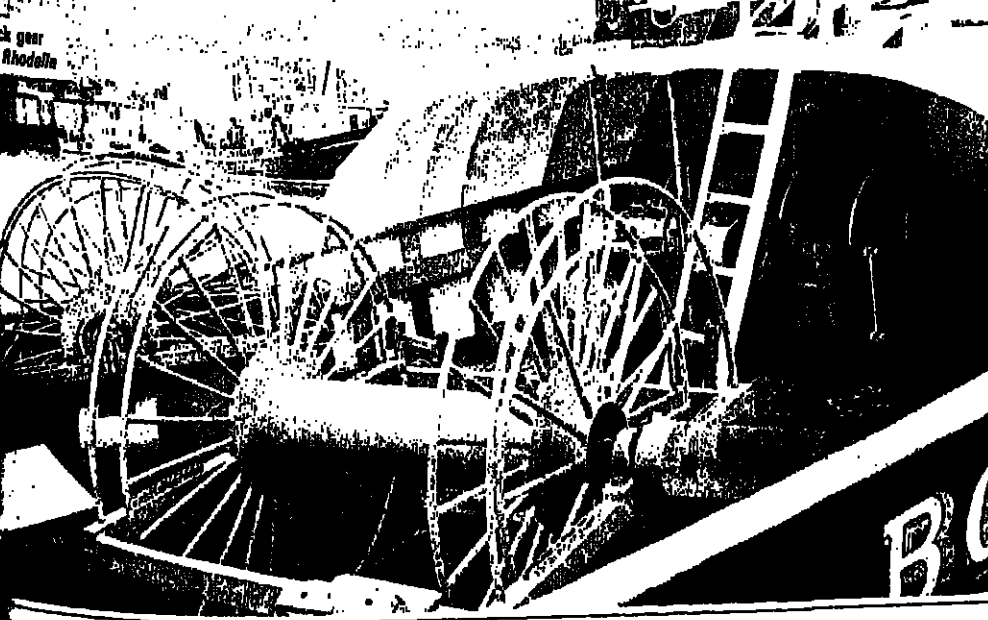
Currie and Thomson have been making chilling plants for seine netters since 1969, when Skipper George Cowie of Buckie approached the firm regarding cooling part of the fishroom aboard his wooden vessel the 64 ft. *Avail*.

The installation included a Frigidaire air cooled condensing unit belt driven from a small Patter diesel engine fitted in the engine room, and two treble banked steel coiled evaporators mounted in the fishroom.

Skipper Cowie was so impressed with the performance of the plant that he has since fitted a similar unit to a fishing vessel's equipment and so he applied for a grant from the White Fish Association.

Before approving the application, the WFA sent the Ministry of Technology, Torry Research Station, to evaluate the plant with a view to assessing its economic value in the fish quality.

Evaluation was made on two comparative fishing trips with *Avail*, one with the chilling plant in operation and the other without. Both trips lasted five days and the same ground



Continued on page 10

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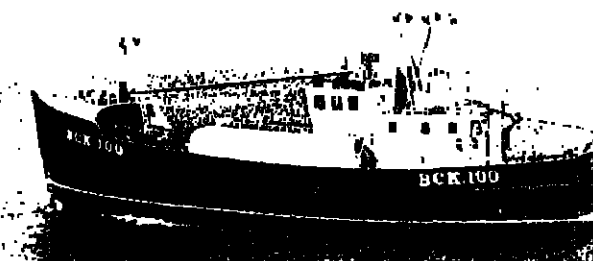
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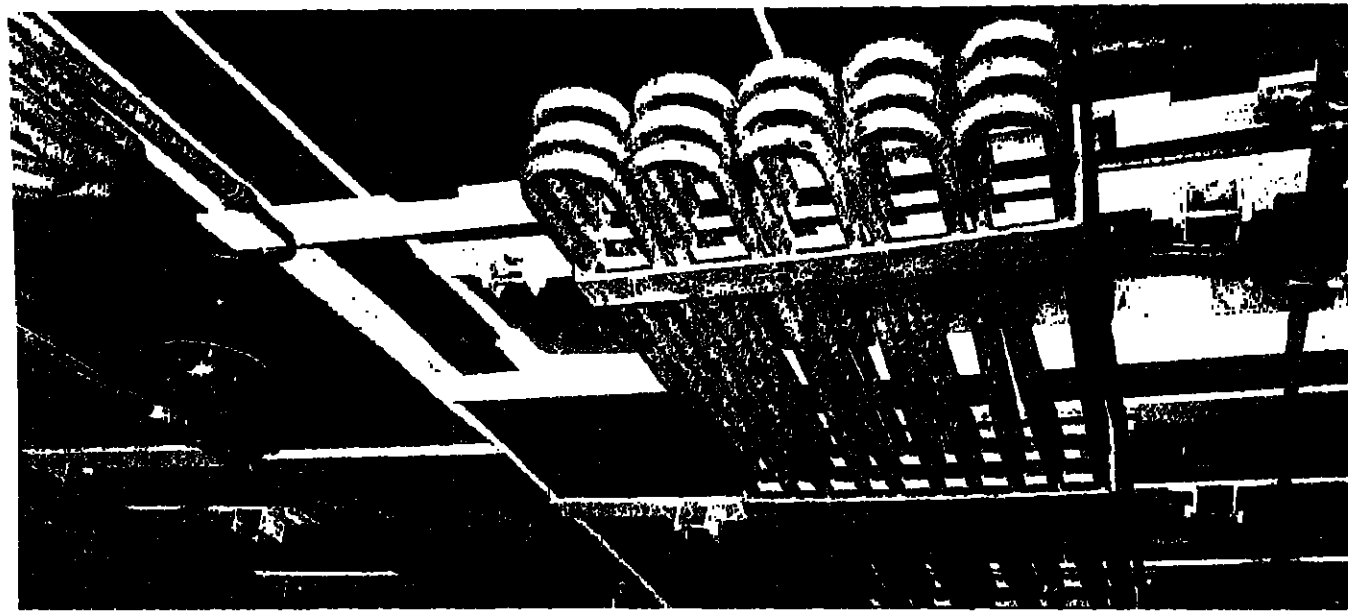
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Cold chill

Continued from p.8

were fished on both occasions. Torry concluded that chilling plants together with deckhead insulation can improve fish quality on vessels which employ the traditional boxing techniques and can only carry a limited amount of ice.

They point out that the object of the plant is not to prevent the ice from melting as this would partially freeze the catch, but to slow the melting rate down so that the limited amount of ice which these vessels can carry does not run away before the end of a fishing trip.

Scientists recommended a number of modifications to the plant and fishroom including the use of water cooled condensers and a greater

evaporator surface, and full deckhead insulation. Since 1969 Currie and Thomson have supplied a number of chilling plants to Scottish seiners, incorporating Torry's recommended improvements, introducing modifications to suit the larger vessel.

Skipper Cowie had a plant fitted to his new vessel *Ocean Hunter* built by Macduff Boatbuilding and Engineering Company in 1972, and other installations include the Buckie boats *Airies*, *Conquest*, *Seaforth* and *Rouantea*.

Owing to the experience of boatbuilders in installing the equipment, the units have now taken on a much more sophisticated appearance. Today the standard equipment comprises a three hp water-cooled Frigidaire plant with four steel tube evaporators, and for the bigger boats a five hp plant feeding six evaporators.

The equipment can be fully automated and is normally worked off the boat's 110V d.c. electric supply and incorporating safety controls with a suitable control/alarm system in the wheelhouse.

Currie and Thomson feel that the most recent installation aboard *Rhodella* could well be an important step towards the ultimate in chilling procedures.

Irish Sea: atom waste warnings

CERTAIN areas of the Irish Sea could be closed to fishermen because of the increasing output of radioactive caesium.

Fish caught in the Irish Sea and off Western Scotland now contain sufficient caesium to cause significant genetic damage to the general population, warned Professor William T. Windle Potts, professor of biological sciences at the University of Lancaster.

Fishermen who fish off the coast in the neighbourhood of Windscale and who are heavy fish eaters already have at least one third of the maximum allowable dose in their diet alone, says the Ministry of Agriculture.

As well as the genetic dangers there is the possibility of fishermen losing their jobs as contaminated areas are usually closed down rather than cleared of the pollution. When this happens the fishermen receive no compensation.

Even if a small sea area were to be closed it could damage the whole fishing industry because of the public reaction to reports of contaminated food, said Professor Potts.

More strictly defined limits on the quality of the offshoot from Windscale would help more effective action to be taken in any further case of the output of isotope started to rise dramatically, he added.

If limits set by an independent body were likely to be exceeded at any time then British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., should have its operations temporarily stopped to restrict the output of radioactive waste, said Professor Potts.



SEPTEMBER 24, 1927

COCKENZIE, Scotland, fishermen hold their annual holiday Box Meeting. Crowds of fisher-folk from the Firth of Forth join a procession through the streets after local fishermen discuss their year's fishing. Procession halts for dancing and fishermen, wives and sweethearts are dressed in their Sunday best.

GERMAN steam trawler crews find out the secret location of new hake grounds discovered on exploratory trips from Fleetwood.

ROBINSON Crusoe should have been envied, not pitied, as the island was shipwrecked on is one of the most picturesque and fruitful spots in South America, according to America's Smithsonian Institution. There are vast resources of shrimps and crabs around Juan Fernandez Island.

'Girl Rona' is raised from 200ft of water

A 50-TON Devon trawler is back in her home port of Teignmouth after laying on the seabed in 200ft. of water off the Cornish coast for eight months.

An amateur team of divers raised her after she had been written off as too costly to salvage.

The 50ft. steel trawler *Girl Rona*, owned and skippered by Reg Matthews of Teignmouth, developed a leak in heavy seas off Dodman Point, South Cornwall, on January 28 (Fishing News, February 4).

Skipper Matthews and the crew were rescued, but the craft, which has a replacement value of £150,000 sank in upright position.

Reg did not give up in his salvage efforts to raise his £60,000 trawler which had only been at sea for one year, although other experts said that the cost would be too much.

Being a former member of the British Sub-Aqua Club he was aware of the lifting technique used to raise war-time vessels.

He contacted John "Jack" White of the BSAC and they worked out a lifting operation, using five-ton lifting bags.

Amateur divers of the BSAC began work six weeks ago. They handed together one of the bags to push up *Girl Rona* 50ft. at a time, so that she could be towed to shallower water by the trawler *Gerryann C*.

...bringing a big bonus for Guy

THE RAISING of *Girl Rona* gave crewman Guy Leggett a £20 bonus this week.

He lost the £20 when *Girl Rona* sank earlier this year.

"We had little time to pick personal possessions because it all happened so quickly," said Guy.

"I thought I'd seen the last of £20 in cash which I left in my jacket in the cabin".

But when the trawler was raised his jacket was found — and inside were the notes, still in good condition, despite six months on the seabed.

The trawler, which was towed to her home port by *Gerryann C* was too late for the blessing of the boats ceremony at Teignmouth.

Owner Reg Matthews, disappointed at missing it, has arranged a special blessing by local clergy of both his trawlers on Saturday.

Oil junk damages 2 boats

TWO MORE Shetland boats have had their gear damaged by debris on the seabed in the vicinity of the oil pipelines from North Sea fields to the Sullom Voe oil terminal.

The Whalsay boat *Korona* received several hundred pounds worth of damage when she picked up a piece of jagged metal on the seabed south of the island of Fetlar. *Medalia* had to drop her net when it caught up on something heavy on the seabed.

Both boats are claiming compensation from the oil industry. A BP spokesman said that the piece of metal which damaged *Korona's* net appeared to have been in the water for only a few days.

There had been no work done on the pipeline for months in that area, he said, but oil rigs there had been sheltered during recent bad weather, and it is possible the debris came from them.

The two incidents this week are the first since a local boat *Wavecrest*, was chartered by the oil industry last year to cover the areas around the pipelines with a special dredge in an attempt to pick up debris.

She did have some success, but many fishermen believe that there is still a lot of oil related junk on the seabed waiting to be picked up in the nets.

MANX 'FARCE' LETTERS

SIR, The conservation measures brought into force by the Isle of Man government seem to be the biggest farce the fishing industry has ever seen.

Last week the quotas were doubled from five units to 10 units per man per day. Why? Because it is not known whether the boats which have licences will be able to catch the full quota before the fishing is closed.

Would it not have been better to have left the quota as it was and issue more licences to give more boats the chance to catch in the colloidal pools the herring is fetching?

Boats which grossed £12,000 last week will now double their gross if they catch more boats they allowed to fish their waters the more benefit it would be for the whole island. The tradesmen alone would have known the benefit, as boats mean money to everyone connected with the fishing industry.

Is this the thin end of the wedge for the fishermen who have not been granted licences this year?

What of years to come? Will the fishing be worked on a rota basis whereby the boats which were granted licences this year will not get one next year or is the Manx fishing destined to be a restricted fishing zone from now on?

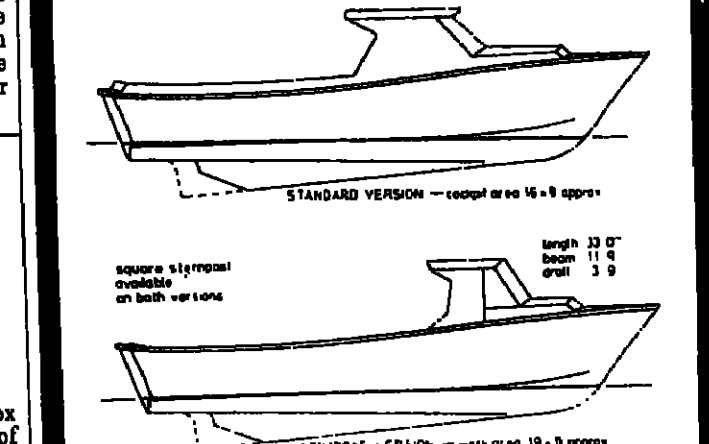
A total quota must surely have been decided "on for conservation" measures so why should it make any difference whether there are 20 boats or 200?

I would have thought the

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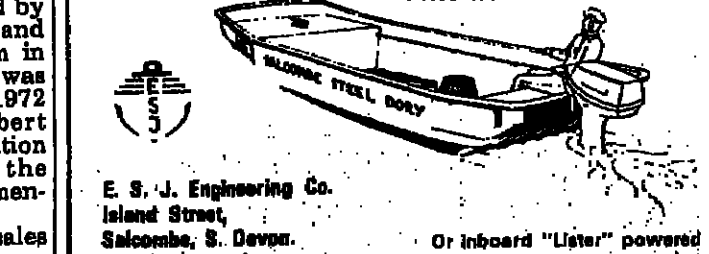
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Offer of Cornish beauty area for fish landing

ONE of Cornwall's most beautiful areas has been offered to the National Trust.

The move may help local fishermen to win their fight to allow them to land mackerel there during the winter months.

John Vyvyan, of Tremayne Quay, and owner of the Helford River, made the offer after weeks of controversy following a local planning application by Cadwith fishermen wishing to use Tremayne Quay as a landing place for fish.

The application was submitted by Ben Collins on behalf of local fishermen who have often been forced to moor in the river and ferry their catches ashore to pack them on to waiting lorries.

A site meeting by Kerrier District Council led to strong opposition from local conservationists and the Department of the Environment have taken the unprecedented step of wishing to be kept informed on the situation although no appeal stage has yet been met.

Mr. Vyvyan has sympathies with the fishermen and appreciates their need for a suitable spot to land fish, particularly in view of recurrent economic rises and increasing unemployment in Cornwall.

Because of the controversy, he has offered the complete project, that is Tremayne Quay, a boat house, a strip of nearby woods and the access roads to the National Trust.

The plan will be discussed at a meeting in October, but sympathies are known to be with the local fishing industry.

Local conservationists claim it would lead to commercialisation of the river. They say it was never intended for fishermen and should not be used as such in the future.

Others claim that fishing, as one of Cornwall's leading industries, should be allowed, and the men, who are finding it increasingly difficult to find a place to land their catches should be allowed to use the area.

Insurance pay-out

THE PLYMOUTH boat *Mam Goz* which suffered fire damage after it trawled up some phosphorous is to be repaired under insurance cover.

The Sunderland Marine Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd. told *Fishing News* that no indication had been given to the owner of the boat, skipper Ted Lawton, that his claim would not be met. This follows a report in *Fishing News* September 6, that

Skipper Lawton had been told that he had no chance with a claim.

The claim was dealt with promptly as the insurers and the agreed cost of repairs will certainly be met.

The particular policy under which *Mam Goz* is insured does not pay out for loss of earnings or damage to fishing gear. Sunderland point out that supplementary cover is available for these losses as an optional extra.

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some east coast towns on the east coast of England and in the River Fal, traditionally recognised as an area of brood production.

THE TERMS shrimps and prawns are widely used in the UK industry to describe the same species and this can lead to some confusion.

lobster, which is exported from Europe and if the demand from countries like France, Germany and Belgium for our own merchants are keen to buy. This does help us because fuel, bait and gear prices continue to rise.

Oh, it's a crazy world!

TRAPP

